

Newberg Downtown Improvement Plan

Vision/Desired Outcomes/Concepts/Big Ideas

A substantial number of ideas were generated by the Project Advisory Committee, the public and the project team during the initial, visioning phase of Plan development. These have been synthesized into a vision statement and a set of ten desired outcomes that would further describe an envisioned future for downtown. In addition, ten draft “big ideas” have been formulated which would then be used to help focus the generation of recommended projects and actions that would create a climate for investment and stimulate development to achieve the envisioned future for downtown Newberg. The vision, desired outcomes and conceptual “big ideas” are provided below.

Vision and Desired Outcomes for Downtown Newberg

Downtown Newberg will be a thriving, active and attractive destination at the gateway to Oregon’s wine country. Building upon an authentic main street environment and maximizing redevelopment opportunity, Downtown will have a successful, complementary mix of retail, civic, entertainment cultural, office and residential uses with pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, public art, and strong connections to adjacent neighborhoods. A place to live, work, shop and play, Downtown Newberg will have the following characteristics:

1. Downtown will be a ***vibrant, inviting, and fun destination*** for those coming from near and far
2. Downtown streets will be ***pedestrian-friendly and safe*** for all modes of transportation
3. Downtown will be the ***center for public life*** - a place to shop, work, visit, gather and play
4. Downtown will have ***increased density, a diverse mix of businesses*** and a ***broad range of places in which to live***
5. Downtown will be ***easy to navigate*** through attractive, effective signage and ***physical connections*** between activity centers and districts
6. Downtown will have a variety of ***easy-to-find parking*** options
7. New development and redevelopment will ***complement older and historic buildings***
8. Downtown will be “people-oriented” with attractive, comfortable, and functional ***amenities or public uses on the sidewalk*** or in other right of way
9. Downtown will build upon Newberg’s ***strong community spirit***, and ***incorporate public art*** reflecting the local character
10. Downtown will have the appropriate type and level of infrastructure to support the envisioned future type, mix and intensity of uses

Conceptual “Big Ideas”

The ten conceptual “big ideas” around which to focus the Downtown Improvement Plan are listed and described briefly below:

- Gateways
- 1st Street Improvements
- Hancock Street Reinvention
- East End/Gateway District
- West End/Mill District
- 2nd Street Mixed Use District
- Civic/Cultural Corridor
- Core Catalyst Development
- North-South Connections
- Celebrate Art

Gateways

Heralding arrival at a special destination

Gateway features help define neighborhoods and districts through the design of landscape, buildings, or art installations to symbolize or designate an entrance and signal a sense of arrival to a special area or place. Gateways often employ streetscape schemes or physical structures such as landmarks, public art, special signs, a highly-visible archway or some other drive-through entry feature to help establish a district’s identity – sending a signal to residents and visitors that they are approaching/entering a special place with a unique identity, one in which the community takes pride. There are three key primary “gateways” to downtown Newberg that can inform the greatest number of visitors from the east, west and north. These key gateways, in conjunction with a clear system of directional wayfinding signage can make downtown a more legible, identifiable and easily accessible destination.

1st Street Improvements

Making what’s good even better!

1st Street is Downtown Newberg’s “main street” – the principal business street within the downtown area, with a concentration of businesses, restaurants and services within a walkable environment – and the social “center” of the community. New development and major redevelopment will be more vertical in nature, providing increased opportunities for new businesses and residents, and creating additional vitality downtown. The pedestrian quality of the 1st Street environment should invite visitors and shoppers to explore, linger, have a conversation, have a meal at a restaurant’s outdoor tables, and provide an attractive and safe atmosphere for exploration of businesses and local attractions and for personal interaction. Reducing traffic from three lanes to two, retaining on-street customer and visitor parking, increasing the width and attractiveness of the sidewalk environment, improving the streetscape and providing safer pedestrian crossings will, in combination, help advance 1st Street’s role as the center for public life within Newberg and Downtown.

Hancock Street Reinvention

Changing its character over time

While Hancock Street is one of Downtown's two primary "traffic streets" – an important connection and through-way for local residents and for the movement of goods and services to and through the community – it has an important role to play in the growth and continued evolution of Downtown. Reducing traffic from three lanes to two, increasing the width and attractiveness of the sidewalk environment and providing safer pedestrian crossings will make Hancock a more attractive "address" for the mixed-use development that complements the more traditional "main street" role of 1st Street. Over time, infill development and redevelopment will be oriented toward the street, and result in a higher-density and mix of uses, creating a more vital location for office, housing and commercial uses, and in Hancock Street becoming a business district destination in its own right.

East End/Gateway District

A signature "welcome" to downtown's main point of entry

For those coming to Newberg from Portland and other locations to the northeast, the East End or "Gateway District" will serve as the point of arrival to a special place – downtown, the "heart" of Newberg, and the first point of entry to Oregon's wine country. Immediate and clear "wayfinding" signage will be provided directing those arriving from the northeast to where attractions and destinations can be accessed, such as the 1st Street retail and entertainment district, the Chehalem Cultural Center, George Fox University, the West-End Mill District, and where parking is to be found. This could be the location for a signature development, such as an attractive hotel and small conference facility, providing lodging for those doing business in Newberg and for tourists accessing the community's attractions and surrounding wine country.

West End/Mill District

A place where things are made and experienced

Possessing a combination of employment and commercial uses, downtown's West End/Mill District presents an opportunity for building upon the industrial and employment heritage of the area. This area can serve as a location for those uses that may not have a home in the core of downtown, but play a vital role in the downtown environment. Given its history and suitability for a variety of employment and commercial uses, redevelopment within this district would be guided with a lighter touch, retaining some of the area's "gritty" feel and ambience, which is a key part of its appeal. In addition to employment, the west end and the old mill area in particular can serve as a destination for "craft industrial" uses – places where goods can be made, sampled or touched (and purchased). Within easy walking distance from the community's Civic/Cultural Corridor and 1st Street's main street character and feel, this "jobs-focused" concept will also have added tourism value, building upon the appeal of goods produced locally and from materials sourced locally or within the region.

Second Street Mixed-Use District

A place to live with access to all downtown has to offer

Housing is a key component of successful downtowns – it provides for a large and growing market of consumers wanting to live in close proximity to goods, services, restaurants, and other activities and resources offered in a downtown environment. Demographic trends show a demand for the type of

smaller, mixed-use or free-standing urban housing products that would be suitable in downtown Newberg. Downtown residents provide additional buying power to support local merchants. Similarly, downtown residents generate additional vitality and safety – providing “eyes on the street” seven days a week – and housing grows the tax base for the community. While additional housing is encouraged throughout downtown, the area along 2nd Street offers a unique opportunity for appropriately-scaled multi-family apartments, condominiums, townhomes, or rowhomes at a variety of affordability levels in a mixed use environment immediately adjacent to the 1st Street commercial core. This will help fill a demonstrated housing need, create an active downtown neighborhood, and increase the number of rooftops supporting downtown merchants.

Civic/Cultural Corridor

Linking cultural, recreational and civic institutions and opportunities

The Civic and Cultural Corridor is an important activity center – a celebratory location connecting key institutions within the community such as City Hall, the Chehalem Cultural Center, the Public Services facility and Memorial Park. The Corridor will provide a special pedestrian-oriented streetscape environment that can be easily reconfigured as a “festival street” along portions of Howard Street for special occasions and events. The Civic and Cultural Corridor will also feature special signage, wayfinding, public art distributed throughout the corridor to signify a unique identity and provide interest, and streetscape treatments to highlight the connection of downtown and neighborhoods to the north, to Memorial Park and the river to the South, and to nearby activity centers such as George Fox University. The “occasional” festival street facilities can include special paving treatments, rolled curbs to facilitate easy pedestrian movement, electricity and water for special uses such as seasonal/holiday lighting, or for food and craft vendors.

Core Catalyst Development

Jumpstarting private investment

“Catalyst” developments are those that present a particularly good opportunity for stimulating private investment and for substantively changing the development environment downtown - serving as a catalyst for development consistent with the vision of the Downtown Improvement Plan. A signature development on the City-owned former Butler Chevrolet site, in the heart of the 1st Street retail and entertainment district and along/within the Civic and Cultural corridor, has the potential to help create and jumpstart the climate for private investment and action. This site has long been envisioned as having the potential for a “showcase” mixed-use development (housing above retail/entertainment uses) perhaps featuring an opportunity to sample food and wine from the region, and perhaps linked to a future adaptive re-use of the historic Post Office. This concept provides a key opportunity for employing a public-private partnership to facilitate the development of this opportunity site in a manner consistent with the vision for downtown.

North/South Connections

Linking downtown to the greater community

Key local north/south streets within and accessing Downtown such as Blaine, College, Main and Meridian Streets should be enhanced to emphasize and improve connections to adjacent neighborhoods, and uses close to downtown such as Friendsview Retirement Community and George Fox University. It should be easy to understand how to get downtown and safe and easy to access it –

by car, by bike or on foot. Perhaps there's even a future trolley using the existing railroad tracks within Blaine Street to connect such attractions as the Alison Inn, the Chehalem Cultural Center, Memorial Park and the Willamette River. Quality connections require good street and walkway connectivity, effective signage, and a distinct streetscape that is attractive and easy to understand, making the connection to Downtown clear, safe and pleasant.

Celebrate Art!

Good art is good business

It's been said that "the sign of a great city is the strength of its cultural life". Public art helps create an attachment to one's community, and has been proven to be a highly cost-effective way of helping spur economic revitalization in downtowns nation-wide. Public art reflecting the character and identity of the community should be an important part of the Downtown Improvement Plan, and should be provided through a mix of signature installations in locations special to the community such as Francis Square; within an improved streetscape environment along 1st and Hancock Streets; along the Cultural Corridor; or building upon the existing great examples of murals adorning the walls of downtown buildings.

Whether the installment is permanent or temporary, the ability of public art to educate, create jobs, increase real estate value, build community pride, increase tourism, and provide other benefits is well-known. According to the Urban Land Institute, "good art is good business".